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ABSTRACT

Teaching about Inner Asia in the context of today's world can be accomplished by presenting the historical relations among China, Russia, and Inner Asia. Present day China-Russia policies and relations date back to earlier unequal treaties forced upon China by the West. China has historically attempted to maintain an isolationist position against constant invasions, many from the northern Mongols who were able to succeed in ruling the Chinese people for over 700 years. The Great Wall of China was constructed to protect the Chinese people from invasions by the northern barbarians. China's policy toward this region was characterized by tribute missions. Soldiers and merchants were not esteemed by their society, and Chinese policy was opposite Russia's "war or trade" policy. The first conquest of China was that of Ghengis Khan and his grandson Khubilai Khan in A.D. 1280. After the end of the Khans' reign in A.D. 1370, the Ming Dynasty maintained strong military forces against the Mongols for the purpose of keeping the Mongol tribes warring amongst themselves and disunited. (NL)

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TEACHING AIDS FOR THE STUDY OF INNER ASIA

NO. 8

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Georgetown University

THE ROLE OF INNER ASIA IN EARLY RUSSO-CHINESE RELATIONS

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Offers of collaboration and suggestions for topics are welcome and should be addressed to Professor Denis Sinor, Director, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

For an understanding of this pamphlet it is indispensable that one be familiar with Teaching Aid No. 1 for the Study of Inner Asia: Professor Denis Sinor's What is Inner Asia? Before studying early Sino-Russian relations in Inner Asia, one should survey and summarize China's interest in the "Northern Regions" (Inner Asia) as well as Russian expansion into this region.

I. CHINA'S RELATIONS AND POLICY TOWARDS THE "NORTHERN REGION" OR INNER ASIA

The importance to China of a policy towards her neighbors in general and towards the "Northern Barbarians"[1] in particular can be gathered from the fact that for over seven hundred years of the two thousand-odd years of the imperial period of her history China was ruled, either partially or totally, by dynasties of "invasion" or "infiltration" coming from the north. Since they approached China from the north they were called "Northern Barbarians" and their homeland the "Northern Region." Even the Russians, who of course approached China from the north, were placed in the category of the "Northern Barbarians." Thus, viewed from China, the "Northern Region" is Inner Asia, and this even before the establishment of the Empire in

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1. China in Chinese is Chung-kuo or "Middle Kingdom" (the only civilized country), surrounded by the four Barbarians: in the north by the "Northern Barbarians" (the nomadic tribes of Inner Asia and the Russians who approached China from the north), the "Southern Barbarians" (the inhabitants of South and Southeast Asia), "Eastern Barbarians" (the Japanese), and Western Barbarians: (Europeans, Arabs, and others who came by sea). This Chinese ethnocentrism, however, was cultural and not racial since all Barbarians were welcome to drink from the fountain of culture as long as they came peaceably and brought tribute in recognition of Chinese cultural superiority. In Chinese there is no equivalent to the colonialist and imperialistic slogans or euphemisms of the Western nations (all with racial overtones): "Spices and Souls" (Portuguese), "Gold, Glory and God" (Spanish), "The White Man's Burden" (British), "La Mission Civilisatrice" (French), "War or Trade" (Russian), "Manifest Destiny" (U.S.A.), and "Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere" (Japan).

China (221 B.C.). For instance King Mu (r. 1002-947 B.C.) of the Eastern Chou dynasty, accourding to legend, campaigned afar in Central Asia--the northern part of Inner Asia--and visited the so-called Queen Mother of the West (hsi wang mu) of whom nothing further is known, but whom nineteenth-century European missionary scholars tried to identify with the Queen of Sheba.

During the first imperial dynasty (the Ch'in, 221-207 B.C.), while Shih Huang Ti, the first Emperor, ruled, General Meng T'ien was sent to consolidate the walls the northern feudal states had built against the nomads before the unification of the Empire. The resulting Great Wall of China stretched from Kansu Province in the West to the Pacific coast. During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) Pan Ch'ao (A.D. 32-92), one of the great Han proconsuls in Inner Asia, earned his reputation by his exploits, which are mentioned in Chapter 5 of his twin brother Pan Ku's History of the Former Han Dynasty.

During the T'ang dynasty (618-908) the Arab-Muslim expansion in Inner Asia had reached its high point and had begun to encroach on the most remote T'ang tributary states around Samarkand, while in the 740's rebellious Tibetans and Western Turks had to be subjugated. In 747 and in 750 Chinese armies crossed the Pamirs and in 751 were defeated by the Arabs and Western Turks in the battle of the Talas river near Samarkand. The victory was a Pyrrhic one and drew the limits of Arab expansion into Asia; it also led

to the immediate recall of the demoralized T'ang forces from Inner Asia, which thereafter turned increasingly from Buddhism to Islam. Chinese power was not to reappear in the area until the Mongol (Yuan) dynasty, six centuries later.

But most of the time and especially during the long periods of peace or decline Chinese policy aimed at a recognition of Chinese suzerainty symbolized by the tribute missions. This policy was as much the result of the Chinese concept of the "Middle Kingdom" existing "under Heaven" (t'ien hsia) and the position of the emperor as "Son of Heaven" as it was of the low esteem in which soldiers and merchants were held throughout the Confucian imperial period of Chinese history. Hence the basic difference between the traditional Chinese policy and the Russian policy: this at all times aimed at expansion and trade, or as Peter the Great put it, "voyevat ili torgovat" (wage war or trade). The Chinese considered trade missions as tribute-bearers come to acknowledge Chinese cultural superiority and suzerainty. This general policy was applied flexibly as the times and the situation required. If as a consequence of this Chinese policy it is true that there was no period in history when the Chinese conquered or controlled the whole of Inner Asia or even Mongolia before the establishment of the Manchu or Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911),[2] it is

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2. There are, however, Chinese authors, e.g. Shih

also true that before the Mongol invasion and establishment of the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368) steppe nomads never succeeded in occupying or controlling the whole of China. Historically, the success of barbarian invasions of China from the north depended on the outcome of the preliminary struggle among the barbarians themselves. It is an axiom of Chinese history that a successful invasion of China must be preceded by several tribal wars to the north, and that such fighting is militarily much more serious than the subsequent actual invasion itself. This explains the readiness of the Mongols to engage in the bitterest kind of fighting among themselves, since they were convinced that any Mongol tribe that could master other Mongols could master anyone else in the world. If this preliminary fighting produced a number of tribes of comparable strength, then there would be no invasion of China, or, at best, only a partial one. If this preliminary fighting, however, produced a leader of real genius who could subdue the other tribes, then the conquest of China would be total. Such was the first conquest of China in her history: that of Chingis Khan and his grandson Khubilai Khan (1280).

Ti-tsu[in Ti-li Chih-shih (Geographical Knowledge), No. 2 (March 1974) pp. 7-10], Shih Yu-hsin [Li-shih Yen-chi'u (Historical Research), No. 1 (Dec. 20, 1974], T'an Ch'i-hsiang and T'ien Ju-k'ang [ibid], etc., who hold that the Amur River basin has been Chinese territory since "time immemorial" or at least since the T'ang dynasty, when administrative stations were set up by China in some parts of Inner Asia. If they were established they did not last.

The descendants of Khubilai Khan, having been defeated in China (1368), fled to their native Mongolia. Togon-Temur, the last great khan, died in 1370. Not content with this, the Chinese kept on pressing and pursuing the Mongols. The losses inflicted on them discredited the house of Khubilai, and the Mongol tribes, for the most part, resumed their autonomy.

Thus the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in accordance with traditional Chinese policy towards the "Northern Barbarians" maintained strong military forces, since the Mongols, in spite of their disunity, still retained considerable strength and their domination over China was vividly remembered. Ming military strength was based on the wei-so (settlement) system, which was similar to the fu-ping system of the T'ang.[3] This enabled the Hung-wu emperor (1368-1398), founder of the Ming dynasty, to lead nine campaigns, and the Yung-lo emperor (1402-1424) to lead five campaigns against the Mongols. The maintenance of this strong military system and a demonstration of aggressiveness enabled the Chinese to keep a balance of power among the Mongols and made it more advantageous for Mongol princes to submit and to seek Chinese protection than to antagonize them. Even Tamerlane, in a shrewd

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3. Joseph S. Sebes, S.J., The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689). The Diary of Thomas Peneira, S.J. Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I. Via dei Penitenzieri 20, 1961, pp. 35-39.

diplomatic move to enhance his prestige, acknowledged himself a vassal of the Hung-wu emperor and thus obtained imperial sanction for his further conquests, and this in spite of the fact that his ultimate aim was the conquest of China. Other Mongol princes followed the same example, sending envoys annually to the Ming court. These missions were at first diplomatic (tributary) in nature, recognizing Chinese suzerainty, but as Chinese military strength declined, they came only to enjoy the famous imperial hospitality. These more peaceful aspects of Mongolian affairs were handled by the Meng-ku ya-men (office of Mongolian Affairs).[4] After 1429 (end of the nine great maritime expeditions led by Cheng Ho through the South Seas) the country, accustomed to peace, entered into a period of self-imposed isolation (for the first time in Chinese history); and its military system declined, resulting in a new aggressiveness on the part of the Mongols and other tribes.

Thus one can conclude that as great as the resurgence of Chinese power was during the initial period of

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4. In 1683 the Meng-ku ya-men was succeeded by the Li-fan-yuan Department of Tibetan, Korean and Mongolian Affairs (since the Russians also came from the north, their affairs were handled by this office till 1861); in 1861 the Li-fan-yuan became the Tsung-li ya-men (dealing with all foreigners), and in 1901 the Wai-wu-pu or Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

the Ming dynasty, it did not succeed in materially altering the situation north of the Great Wall among the Mongols and in Inner Asia. It is true that the Ming emperors and generals campaigned far to the north. These campaigns, however, never amounted to conquest since the Mongols remained independent. From the nature and results of these campaigns it may be inferred that, rather than mounting genuine invasions, the Ming rulers were merely supporting one Mongol group against others. The Mongols were driven from China in the first place largely because of internecine disputes over the succession to the throne. These disputes continued and eventually gave the Manchus an opportunity. The Ming dynasty fell so far short of breaking the power of the Mongols that after the death of Yung-lo, China was threatened, on several occasions, by new Mongol invasions.

In Manchuria Chinese power and direct administration was confined to the territories within what became known as the "Willow Palisade."[5] Here the Chinese had been established for centuries, though at times they had been ruled by Inner Asian conquerors. Among the Tunguz tribes

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5. It was a line of frontier fortifications stretching for 960 kilometers. It was constructed, in 1678, on orders from K'ang-hsi. Since sections of it consisted of double rows of willow stakes many of which struck roots and formed an impenetrable thicket, the entire line of fortifications came to be called the "Willow Palisade." K'ang-hsi had it constructed to keep Chinese immigrants out of the homeland of the Manchus and to keep Manchuria as a no man's land or buffer zone between China and Russia.

to the north Ming China operated by the old device "divide and rule," i.e., by granting titles and subsidies to certain chiefs against possible rivals. These subsidized chiefs were considered as tribute-bearers.

The rise of the Manchus in the seventeenth century also proved that the Mongols and other Inner Asian tribes[6] had maintained their earlier territories and tribal groupings during this period of Ming ascendancy. The changes that had occurred and which were of the greatest importance in the rise of the Manchus were not due to Ming intervention. They had taken place, first of all, in the Nonni river valley and the upper Amur, where outlying Mongols had begun to unite with Tunguz tribes, thus creating the people later known as the Daurs, Dahurs, or Daghors. Another change took place in Kirin Province, where the taiga (forest belt) touches the steppe. From this fusion emerged the Manchu tribe usually called the Yehonola, the last one to be conquered when Nurhachi created the Manchu nation by welding together the different Manchu tribes.

With the accession of the Manchu or Ch'ing dynasty (1644) new factors complicated the old problem of dealing with the Mongols. Being themselves from the territories of the Northern Barbarians, the Manchus realized that it

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6. For a listing of the Uralic-Altaic tribes (generally called Tartars), see Sebes, op. cit., Appendix I, pp. 304-312.

would not be enough for them simply to continue the traditional Chinese policy of supporting a balance of power in Mongolia, but rather that it would also be necessary to impose and maintain military control of the area. The Manchus succeeded in establishing control over Eastern Mongolia and the Liao-tung peninsula by a mixed process of conquest and alliance, in which the enlistment of Chinese and Mongol troops resulted in the formation of the Chinese and Mongol Banners, thereby strengthening the basis of Manchu power in their conquest of China. Thus these Eastern Mongols, having formed an early alliance with the Manchus and having been given Manchu princesses in marriage to strengthen this alliance, considered themselves free allies rather than conquered subjects. All this helped the Manchus in the conquest of Inner Mongolia and, in 1644, in the invasion of China.

After 1644, however, the Manchus were faced with four problems. First, within China they had to restore political unity and economic stability, which had been shattered by the disorders during the last years of the Ming dynasty. Secondly they had to maintain and extend their military control along the Great Wall frontier. For this they needed Mongol contingents to complete their control over China as well as over Inner Mongolia. Third, the northern (Khalkha) and western (Ölöd) Mongols were not yet subjugated and the Manchus were especially afraid that the Western Mongols under Galdan Khan might create

an independent military power challenging their own. And fourth, the Russians appeared on the Amur.

But how did the Russians get to the Amur?

II. RUSSIA'S EASTWARD EXPANSION INTO INNER ASIA

Russia's successful eastward expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is in sharp contrast with the expansion of the Western European powers (Portugal, Spain, England, Holland, and France). It was an overland and not a seaward expansion, and it was conditioned by four factors. The first of these factors concerns the nature of the seaboards. Though washed by a number of seas (Arctic Ocean, White Sea, Baltic, Gulfs of Bothnia, Finland and Livonia, the Caspian, the sea of Azov, and the Black Sea) Russia's coasts have few locations suitable for seaports and before Peter I (1689-1725) and Catherine II (1762-1796) were not permanent possessions of Russia. The second factor was the excellent river system and the easy portage in the northern part of the Eurasian forest (taiga) zone (Pechora, Kama, Ob, Yenisei, Lena, Amur rivers and their tributaries) which aided the Russians who already had experience in this type of expansion in European Russia. The relatively low Ural Mountains (highest peaks 5500 feet above sea level) were not difficult to cross. This facilitated Russia's eastward expansion in the taiga belt, just as the treeless southern part of the Eurasian steppe had helped the westward migration of the Mongols in

the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The third factor was sable and furs in general, which from early times were commodities of Russian trade. As one author put it: "The sable occasioned the opening and conquest of Siberia; it also paid a large part of the cost with its skin."[7] While later agricultural opportunities and other goods added attraction to the conquest, the initial impulse was given by the seemingly unlimited riches of fur-bearing animals. When their number diminished in one region new places beckoned. This process led ever further eastward, accounting for another unique feature of the conquest of Siberia, namely the speed with which it was accomplished (1579-1644). And the fourth factor was that, unlike the explorers and conquerors from Portugal and Spain who were patronized by governments, the Russian expansion and conquest began as a private enterprise. The first Cossacks were mere outlaws in the eyes of the tsar, who rewarded them only after their achievements had become evident. But this proved advantageous since as a private enterprise the conquest continued even while the Grand Dukes and Tsars were elsewhere engaged, and continued even during the "Time of Troubles" (1603-1613).

With the victories of Yermak, the Russians gained a permanent foothold beyond the Urals. Yermak was a

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7. J. Klein, Der Sibirische Pelzhandel und seine Bedeutung für die Eroberung Sibiriens. Bonn, 1906, pp. 5, 116.

Cossack outlaw commissioned by the Strogonov family; he was called Yermak, "Millstone," but his real name was Vasili Timpfeevich Olenin. In 1558 he penetrated Siberia, and defeated both Kuchum Khan of Sibir (from which the name Siberia is derived) and his nephew Mametkul (1583). (Kuchum Khan belonged to the Uzbek tribe; he was a descendent of Šiban, a son of Jočі and the grandson of Chingis Khan.) During his four years in Siberia Yermak had brought all the Tartars[8] of the Tura, Tobol, and Irtysh rivers under Russian domination, as well as the Ostiaks on the Irtysh and Ob, and Voguls of the Tavda river. Although these territories were lost after Yermak's death in 1584, the loss was temporary. A practicable road had been discovered and a new and successful pattern of invasion and expansion established.

The earlier Russian attempts to penetrate Siberia had amounted to little more than raids, and were all unsuccessful. They were carried out by three peoples at four distinct periods of Russian history. After the Varangian efforts (ninth and tenth centuries), the Novgorodians led expeditions across the Urals between 1032 and 1187, and again between 1465 and 1471, during the decline of Mongol domination in Russia and before the Moscovite conquest of Novgorod in 1478. The Moscovites themselves tried to take Siberia in 1483, 1499, 1550, and

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8. Cf. n. 6.

1557. These expeditions typically involved advancing into native territories, levying the yasak (tax) in furs and other such items as could be obtained from the natives, exacting homage to the tsar and further promises of tribute, and then withdrawing. These raids were unsuccessful because the natives called Yugras (of Ugrian extraction) and the inhabitants of the legendary "Magnaseia" (during the reign of Ivan the Terrible) could not understand why they should pay tribute to these newcomers, in spite of the fact that Ivan III had assumed the title "Prince of Yugria" (Kniaz' Yugorskii) to which his son Vasili IV added that of "Prince of Obdoria and Kondimia" (Kniaz' Obdorskii Kondimskii).[9] Because Ediger (Yadigar), the prince of "Sibir" and chief of the Nogais, paid tribute to him, Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible assumed the title "Lord of Sibir" (Povelitel Sibiri) in 1556. In spite of all this, as stated before, these expeditions had dubious results. Only after Yermak had undermined the power of Kuchum Khan in the Ob river basin did the situation change. It was then that the tsar realized what a great opportunity was at hand. After his 1581 victory Yermak, knowing that for his further enterprises he needed reinforcements only the tsar could furnish, had sent his lieutenant Ivan Koltso to Moscow with a gift of twenty-four hundred sable skins, twenty black fox skins, and

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9. Donald Treadgold, The Great Siberian Migration. Princeton, 1957, p. 17.

fifty beaver skins to inform the tsar of his success. The tsar commuted Yermak's punishment as an outlawed Cossack and sent him costly presents. In 1584, the year after Yermak had died in battle with the Tartars, Ivan IV, in compliance with Yermak's request, sent the Voevode Simeon Bolshovsky with five hundred men, and later others, to complete the conquest of Siberia. In so doing the Russians abandoned the policy of raids, initiating one of planned domination of rivers and portages by the building of ostrogs (block-houses or fortifications) and zimovies (winter stations) around which many of the cities of Siberia grew up. What had started as a private, chartered enterprise of the Strogonov family was taken over by the tsar and became a state venture. The period of raids ended and the occupation of territory began, thereby creating both a defense for European Russia against raids from Asia and a profitable solid base for Russian expansion into Asia. By this planned movement, during the first decade after Yermak's death, the Russians occupied nearly all the strategic bases along the Ob and subjugated the region. Thus the successful pattern of expansion had emerged. In the pacification of the occupied territories the Russian Orthodox Church played an important role by establishing churches and monasteries, and by defending the interests of the natives.[10]

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10. For a complete list of ostrogs, churches, and

The speed with which the conquest of Siberia was accomplished is unique in world history. In a decade and a half the western part of Siberia was under Russian control. The stages of this expansion eastward can be linked to the conquest of the great river basins and the establishment of strong central ostrogs. The first river basin to be conquered was that of the Irtysh followed by that of the Ob with Tobolsk as the central ostrog founded in 1587, which commanded a chain of ostrogs. By 1600 these placed under Russian domination what later on became the Province of Tobolsk. Second was the Yenisei basin with Yeniseisk and Krasnoyarsk as the central ostrogs, founded in 1619 and 1627 respectively. Third was the Lena basin with Yakutsk (1652) the central ostrog. Thus the stage was set for the invasion of the Amur river basin where the Russians for the first time came face-to-face with the Chinese.

Both the voevode of Yakutsk, Peter Petrovich Golovin, and the voevode of Yeniseisk, Afanasei Pashkov, having received reports about the Shilka river (which after its confluence with the Argun river forms the Amur or Hei-lung-chiang, Black Dragon river in Chinese) decided to send expeditions to explore it.

The first expedition coming from Yakutsk, in July

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monasteries see Robert J. Kerner, The Surge to the Sea. The Course of Russian History. The Role of the Rivers, Portages, Ostrogs, Monasteries and Furs. Berkeley and L. A., 1946. pp. 177-190.

1643, was led by Vasily Poyarkov. Having reached the Amur, he sailed down to its mouth; then by sea in the spring of 1645, he reached the mouth of the Ulya river and returned to Yakutsk in June 1646. Poyarkov's report resulted in the second expedition, under Yerofei Pavlovich Khabarov, who left Yakutsk in the spring of 1649 and after having reached the Amur returned there in March 1650 for more supplies. In June 1651 he again reached the Amur and sailing down the river found, at a fortified Daurian village, a garrison strengthened by fifty Manchu horsemen who had been sent by the Shun-chih emperor (1644-1661) to collect the tribute. The Russians took the fort and repelled the Manchus when they tried to retake it. In July Khabarov sailed farther down the Amur and in September reached territories controlled by the Achan tribes; there he decided to winter, and built Achansk ostrog. After the Achan and Ducher tribes had sought protection from the Manchu rulers of China to whom they paid tribute, the Shun-chih emperor ordered the haise, the special defense commissioner at Ninguta, to march against the Russians and if possible to take them alive. In March 1652, the haise with over twenty thousand horsemen armed with bows and matchlocks, and with six cannons attacked the Russians but was defeated. In April Khabarov left Achansk and went back up the Amur where at the mouth of the Sungari river he succeeded in avoiding an army of six thousand Manchus and Ducher. In 1652 having sent for new

reinforcements he ascended the Amur to the mouth of the Kumara where he built the Kumarskoi ostrog. In the meantime Moscow had decided to send an army of three thousand (Khabarov considered six thousand men sufficient to resist forty thousand Manchus) to occupy the newly acquired territories more efficiently. Prince Ivan Ivanovich Lobanov-Rostovsky was chosen as commander and Dimitri Ivanovich Simofiov with a small body of troops was sent in advance. In August 1653 he met Khabarov and his men on the Zeya river and after rewarding them with gold medals in the name of the tsar he proceeded to execute his instructions. Khabarov was to return to Moscow to report in person (he was ennobled, and never returned to the Amur even though Khabarovsk was named after him later on). Tretiak Chechigin, with four men, was to lead an embassy to Peking (but all were killed en route by their Ducher guides). Three forts were to be built, one at Zeya, a second one at the site of the village of Albaza (a Daurian chief), where Albazin was built later on, and a third one at the mouth of the Argun river, not far from the site of the 19th century Aigun. The soil was to be cultivated and one year's provisions collected for an army of six thousand. The last two orders were to be carried out by the new commander of the Russian forces on the Amur, the third man to hold that office, Onufrei Stepanov. Instead of carrying out his orders, Stepanov sailed up and down the Amur and rebuilt (1654) Kumarskoi

as his winter quarters. The Russian garrison numbered five hundred men. In the spring of 1655 a Chinese army, ten thousand strong, armed with cannons and matchlocks besieged the fort but could not take it. After leaving his winter quarters at the mouth of the Sungari Stepanov encountered Feodor Pushkin who had been sent from Yakutsk to the not yet built ostrog at the Argun. Together they sailed down the Amur. When in the spring of 1656 he again ascended the Amur and the Sungari, he found the native villages deserted since in accordance with the Chinese "scorched-earth" policy the natives had been ordered to move further up the Sungari. Thus Stepanov ran short of supplies. When in the spring of 1658 he again ascended the Amur, he encountered a fleet of forty Chinese boats below the Sungari. Some of his men deserted before the battle and the rest were either slain or taken prisoner by the Chinese. Since the Lobanov-Rostovsky expedition never got beyond Western Siberia, the invasion of the Amur basin emanating directly from Yakutsk, or at the initiative of Yakutsk, from Moscow, came to an end in 1658.

Of the three expeditions sent from Yeniseisk into the Amur basin, the first one, Beketov's, which left in June 1652 and reached the confluence of the Shilka and Nercha rivers, accomplished nothing because of harassment by the native Daurian population and their chief Ghantimur. Thus Beketov sailed down the Amur and joined forces with

Stepanov. Undeterred by Beketov's lack of success Voevod Pashkov proposed to Moscow the founding of a town on the Shilka. His plan was approved and he himself was made Commander-in-Chief of all Russian forces on the Amur. Pashkov left Yeniseisk in 1657 and reached the confluence of the Shilka and Nercha where he founded the ostrog Nerchinsk, the only success of his expedition. Running low on supplies, in 1658 he sent Patapov to inform Stepanov of the new situation and to order him to send a hundred men to Nerchinsk. But Stepanov had already perished in the battle on the Sungari and only seventeen of those who had deserted Stepanov joined Pashkov in 1661. Leaving a small garrison at Nerchinsk, Pashkov returned to Yeniseisk in 1662. Later, Larion Tolbuzin became voevode of Nerchinsk, and under his and Daniel Archinsky's able command the city rose in importance. But from 1662 on the Russians had no forces on the Amur. In 1669 a new era was inaugurated by the founding of Albazin (Yaksa in Chinese) established by one Nikifor Cherigovsky, who in 1665 had killed the voevode of Ilimsk; he fled with eighty-four other outlaws to the Amur and on the site of the Daurian chief Albaza's old village built the Albazin ostrog. Reinforced by other parties, they collected the tribute and sent it to Nerchinsk. In 1671 Ivan Okolkov arrived from Nerchinsk and assumed command of Albazin; the following year some peasants came to till the soil. The outlaws were now given a pardon and were rewarded

with substantial presents from the tsar. By 1682 Russian settlements on the Amur and its tributaries included Albazin and a number of villages: Novo Zeisk, Selembinsk, and Dolonsk, named after rivers; Tugirsk and Udsk at rivulets flowing into the sea of Okhotsk.

In review, Russian expansion after its initial success in Western Siberia progressed in three directions. (1) Northeastward in the taiga the Russians encountered primitive tribes with weak or no military organization who were politically unprotected. In this direction the well-established pattern of building ostrogs and of collecting the yasak (tax) worked. This was the pattern of colonization in the Ob,Yenisei, and Lena basins. (2) Further to the south, in Western Siberia and the Trans-Baikal region the Russians encountered steppe nomads and especially the more warlike Mongols who had a military organization and put up a stiff resistance. In their own element of the steppe, the Kahuncks, the Torghud, and the Dzunghar could not be conquered. Moreover, they also formed alliances and some of them recognized Chinese suzerainty directly or indirectly. Against these people a new technique was put into effect, that of the diplomatic mission: obtaining voluntary submission rewarded by promises of the tsar's protection. But the tribes proved volatile and were not subjugated till the middle of the nineteenth century. To a lesser degree the same is true of the Lena Buryats. (3) In an easterly

direction during the first years of the exploration of the Amur in the taiga and its southern margin known as the wooded steppe[11] the method used was the same as that employed in the Ob, Yenisei, and Lena basins. While the Tunguz tribes lacked a high degree of civilization and a military organization, they were under Chinese suzerainty and sought help from the Manchu emperors of China. Since during the initial wave of Russian penetration into the Amur basin, the Manchu government was busy occupying and pacifying China and in no position to send sufficient armies and supplies, it tried to halt or, at least, slow the Russian advance through a "scorched-earth" policy. They advised the natives to destroy their grain and abandon their homes. Thus the Russians were faced with the dilemma of either supplying their advance from Western Siberia or engaging in agricultural colonization. Since the former alternative was impracticable because of difficulties of communications and transportation, they chose the second alternative. But by the time the people needed for agricultural colonization were available, the situation in China was under control and the Manchu government of China was able to start its military campaigns against the Russians. Consequently the Russians were forced, until the middle of the nineteenth century, to settle for diplomatic and trade relations. Since only

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11. Denis Sinor, What is Inner Asia?, Asian Studies Research Institute, 1975, p. 9.

the diplomatic missions took place before the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689) and trade relations came later, it is necessary to look at the diplomatic missions to the Mongols and to China.

In 1616 Tomilko Petrov and Ivan Kunitsin were sent to the Kalmuck nobles; in the same year Vasili Tumenets and Ivan Petrov went to the Altyn Khan of the Western Khalkha. In 1617 Ivan Saveliev was sent to the Kalmucks. In 1634-5 Yakov Tukhachevsky was sent to Altyn Khan, followed in 1638-40 by Vasili Starkov and Stepan Nevierov. In 1649 Zabolotsky led a mission to the Sechen Khan of the Khalkha. Often these Mongol princes promised aid and tribute to the tsar, but just as often they invaded Russian territory. Their attitude reflected their changing relations with China.

In 1618-19 Ivan Petlin and Ondruishka Mundov were sent by the voevode of Tobolsk to the Wan-li emperor of the Ming dynasty. Since they brought no tribute they were sent back empty-handed. In 1654 Feodor Ivanovich Baikov, ambassador of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, presented himself to the Shun-chih emperor but as he was unwilling to perform the kowtow he too had to leave with his mission unfinished. In 1658-1660 Ivan Perfiliev and Setkul Ablin came; they were dismissed, however, since the tsar's letter lacked courtesy. In 1670 Ignati Milovanov's mission came from Nerchinsk, a mission as unproductive as it was strange: he asked the emperor to accept Russian suzerainty.

In 1675-6 Nicolai Gavrilovich Spathari's mission to K'ang-hsi failed because of the kowtow question. And in 1685-1686 Nikifor Venyukov and Ivan Favorov came to announce to the K'ang-hsi emperor the appointment of Feodor Alexeevich Golovin as High Ambassador for the settlement of all outstanding questions.

III. RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

By the time K'ang-hsi ascended the throne it had become clear that diplomacy would not stop the Russians from encroaching on the Amur Region. They would have to be compelled by force. But as the Manchu government was occupied with affairs in South China, which came to a head in the Sanfan rebellion (1673-1680), nothing was done about an expedition against the Russians until 1681. Fully appreciating the fighting ability of the Russians, who by this time had occupied all the northern tributaries of the Amur and subjugated the population, K'ang-hsi prepared the entire campaign with great care.[12] Because of past failures (e.g. at Kumarsk in 1655) owing to a lack of provisions, special attention was paid to the

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12. These preparations are collected in P'ing-ting lo-ch'a fang-lueh (Strategic Plan for the Pacification of the Russians), which is an official account of the campaigns against the Russians between 1682-1689 and is contained in Shuo-fang pei-ch'eng (Historical Source Book of the Northern Region) presented to the throne in 1860 and published by Hung P'eng-nien in 1881.

the logistics of the operation. In 1681 Lieutenant General Langtan together with Pengcun was dispatched to the vicinity of Albazin to make a detailed study of the terrain and to investigate the water route from Ninguta to the Ussuri and to the Amur. The emperor gave personal instructions to Langtan. Again in 1682, another party was sent to measure the volume of water in the Liao river, the knowledge of which was utilized in the building of a canal that same year connecting the Liao with the Sungari. Three years later, in 1685, nineteen stations were built between Kirin and Aigun. Thus two lines of communications, one by water and one by land, were established.

Other preparations were also made. Already in 1680, two hundred and fifty transports were sent to the Liao, the Itung, and the Sungari rivers with food supplies for the armies there, and one hundred ard fifty to the Amur. In 1682, four granaries were established on the Upper Liao. In 1684-5, the system of military farming (on the image of the old Ming military settlements) was introduced in Aigun and rice exports from Manchuria were forbidden.

Shortly after the Russians renewed their activities in 1676 the special defense commissioner moved from Ninguta to Kirin, which, being on the main course of the Sungari nearest the Liao river, was more strategically located. In 1683, a new commissioner, the military governor of Heilungchiang Province, was stationed at Aigun

where the Zeya flows into the Amur. As the Chinese realized that the expulsion of the Russians could not be successful without a fleet, a naval dockyard was built at Kirin in 1676. Many ships were constructed and sailors numbering in the thousands were chosen from among the exiles from the southern Chinese maritime provinces.

When these preparations were completed, the K'ang-hsi emperor still hoped the dispute could be settled without a major war. By 1683 the systematic raids of the Chinese had caused the disappearance of every vestige of Russian occupation on the lower Amur and its tributaries. Only Albazin, fortified and well stocked with provisions, remained to be taken. In 1683, K'ang-hsi sent an edict to Albazin by two Russian prisoners in which he again listed China's grievances (especially Russian encroachment) and threatened an attack unless the situation was remedied. Receiving no answer, he gave orders to start the campaign. The Chinese army numbered between two to five thousand while the Russian garrison consisted of four hundred and fifty men. When a Chinese demand for surrender was not heeded, on June 15, 1683, the Chinese began to bombard Albazin. A Russian priest, Leontiev, seeing the futility of resistance, petitioned Governor Tolbuzin to surrender in exchange for free retreat to Nerchinsk. Tolbuzin acceded and the Chinese accepted these terms. The Russian garrison left except for forty

men who preferred to surrender to the Chinese. They might have been the people who had advocated surrender and were afraid of retaliation from the Russians. The Chinese then destroyed Albazin and retreated to Aigun.

No sooner had the Chinese withdrawn than Tolbuzin reentered Albazin with some new reinforcements led by Beiton, a German, and put the fort once more in a state of defense. When the news of this reached Peking another expedition was sent, again under the command of Langtan. On July 7, 1686, the Chinese army, assisted by a fleet that had sailed down the Sungari, laid siege to Albazin. It lasted three months. While this second campaign was underway, K'ang-hsi sent another letter to the Russian Court by the Dutch embassy which had come to Peking, asking for an answer either through an envoy or through the Dutch.

The reports of the siege of Albazin impressed upon Moscow the fact that the inhabitants of the Amur valley, being tributaries of China, were not as easy to deal with as other Siberians. Acknowledging its ignorance concerning the geography of the Far East, the Russian Court was in no position to send a military expedition so far away. Moreover, at this time it was preoccupied with military affairs in the Baltic and was willing to enter into negotiations with the Chinese for the cessation of hostilities in the Amur basin. On November 15, 1685, the Chinese edict to the garrison of Albazin, dated

1683, was received in Moscow and, detecting in it a conciliatory tone, Russia wasted no time. By November 26, it was decided to send an embassy to China. The following day two messengers, Nikifor Venyukov and Ivan Favorov, were dispatched to Peking to announce the arrival, in the near future, of a Russian plenipotentiary and to request that the siege of Albazin be raised. The K'ang-hsi emperor, in granting this request, ordered the besieging forces to loosen the cordon around Albazin by moving back three versts; the siege was to be completely lifted only after the arrival of the Russian plenipotentiary. The order directing the Chinese forces to leave Albazin and return to Aigun came in August 1687. The messengers returned to Moscow with two letters, one written in Mongolian, acknowledging the messages of the tsar, while the other, in Latin, dated November 21, 1686 contained a detailed list of Chinese complaints against the Russians.

The Russian Court appointed Theodore Alexeevich Golovin as high ambassador plenipotentiary to meet the Chinese representatives and provided him with two principal colleagues, Ivan Vlasov (governor of Nerchinsk) and Simon Kornitskoy. The first instructions given to Golovin, at the beginning of 1686, directed him to propose the fixing of the boundaries along the whole length of the Amur. In case this proposal was rejected, he should

make a small concession by fixing them along the Amur and Bystra river. Should this alternative proposal also be rejected, the line could be fixed further north along the Amur and its tributary, the Zeya. There were also instructions relating to commerce. He was to enter into communication with those Mongol princes who might aid him in his diplomatic task. On January 26, 1686, Golovin and his mission left Moscow and spent two years in Siberia before setting out to go to Selenginsk. While in Siberia he received from Venyukov and Favorov (who had been sent to China on November 27, 1685) the good news that K'ang-hsi had ordered that the siege of Albazin be lifted. K'ang-hsi's letters, forwarded by Venyukov and Favorov, were received in Moscow on July 17, 1687, but the Russian government had already come to the decision, before it received these letters, that further steps should be taken to conciliate China. On July 24, 1687 new and secret instructions were sent to Golovin. He was to cede Albazin for satisfactory commerical relations. He was to avoid bloodshed at all cost, and if all efforts should fail, he was to request that another embassy be permitted to visit Peking at a convenient date. The two Russian agents. Venyukov and Favorov, who had just returned from Peking, seem to have been partly instrumental in making their government realize that these so-called concessions were not really concessions, since Albazin was Chinese territory and was on the point of falling. Thus the government decided to furnish Golovin with new authority enabling him to act on behalf of the Russian government at any conference the Chinese emperor

might decide to hold. This document was dated October 29, 1687, and Golovin was ordered not to leave Siberia until Ivan Loginov, who was bringing him these new instructions, had first been sent to Peking for the purpose of providing K'ang-hsi with a copy of them as proof of Russia's good will. Golovin was also instructed to obtain, if possible, the services of the Khutukhtu (spiritual leader among the Mongols residing at Urga) as a diplomatic liason between Russia and China. But the Khutukhtu was suspicious of Russian overtures and knew that dealing with the Russians too closely would displease the emperor of China.

Korovin, an agent sent by Golovin to China, arrived in Peking on March 14, 1688. From there he brought back the message of the Chinese emperor designating Selenginsk as the site of the proposed conference between the representatives of the two countries. The Chinese government also proceeded to appoint its own plenipotentiaries. Before their departure from Peking, the Chinese delegates submitted to K'ang-hsi a memorandum including the terms on which they proposed to come to an agreement with Golovin. The memorandum reads as follows:

> "Nipchu [Nerchinsk] was originally the pasture land of our Muu Ming an [Ma u-ming an] tribe, and Yaksa [Albazin] was the old home of Pei-Le-ehr [Albaza] our Daurian chieftain. The territories occupied by the Russians are not theirs nor is it a neutral zone. The Amur has strategic importance which must not be overlooked. If the Russians descend it

> they can reach the Sungari. If they ascend the Sungari to the south they can reach Tsitsikar, Kirin, and Nirguta and the land of the Sibo, the Qorcin, the Solon and the Daurian tribes. If they descend the Sungari to the mouth, they can reach the sea. Into the Amur flow the Argun, the Bystra and the Zeya. Along these rivers live our peoples the Orochon, the Gilyak, the Birar, as well as the Ho-chen and Fei-ya-ko. If we do not recover the entire region, our frontier people will never have peace. Nipchu, Yaksa and all the rivers and rivulets flowing into the Amur being ours, it is our opinion that none should be abandoned to the Russians. Ghantimur and the other deserters must be extradited. If the Russians will accede to these points, we in turn shall give up their deserters, send back the prisoners, draw the boundary and enter into commercial relations; otherwise we shall return and make no peace with them at all."[13]

This memorandum and its rigid conditions were approved by the emperor on May 10, 1688. The delegation left Peking for Selenginsk by way of Outer Mongolia on May 29.

The stipulations for a peaceful settlement, on both sides, were based on the political situation of the moment. China had defeated the Russians on the Amur. She had reached an agreement with the Khalkha Mongols, and supplied them with Chinese arms; these in turn attacked Golovin. Thus on their way to Selenginsk the Chinese expected to find Golovin in an embarrassing situation and had every hope of obtaining what they wanted. However, something unforeseen happened. Galdan of the Ölöd Mongols

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13. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

attacked and invaded the territory of the Khalkha, so that the Chinese delegation, after notifying Golovin, was forced to return to Peking. The conference had to be postponed until the following year. Golovin sent his answer through his messenger, Ivan Loginov, who arrived in Peking on May 13, 1689. Golovin asked K'ang-hsi to designate another place for the conference. K'ang-hsi selected Nerchinsk, further stating that the Chinese plenipotentiaries would leave Peking in June.

The Ölöd invasion of the Khalkha created a new situation and reduced China's advantage. There arose the danger of a Russian-Ölöd alliance, which the Ölöd sought. Consequently a peaceful settlement became more desirable for China at least till such time as they could deal with the Ölöd danger. Therefore, K'ang-hsi decided to push forward with all haste to the opening of the negotiations.

On the eve of the second departure of the delegation from Peking, the emperor issued the following instructions:

> "If you insist on keeping Nipchu and not giving it up to the Russians, then their missions and merchants will find no shelter place. At the opening of the conference you should still try to retain Nipchu. But if they beg for that city you may draw the boundary along the Argun river."[14]

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14. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Thus the stage was set for the conference at Nerchinsk. The Chinese were still in a better bargaining position than the Russians. The natives around Nerchinsk were opposed to the Russians, and the Chinese delegation, arriving ten thousand strong, created a position for negotiating from strength. In contrast, the Moscow treasury was depleted by military expenditures in Russia proper and by internal economic depression. Good trade relations with China could prove helpful. With this in mind the Russian delegation was ready to make concessions. K'ang-hsi, however, was not interested in trade. What he wanted was peace with Russia and a settlement of the border both in eastern Inner Asia (eastward from Nerchinsk) and western Inner Asia (the Mongolian border). At Nerchinsk the Chinese obtained the delineation of the eastern sector only. Golovin stalled for time claiming that he had no authority to negotiate the western sector. (That came in the Treaty of Kiakhta, 1727.)

The treaty of Nerchinsk was signed on September 7, 1689. It was concluded on the basis of equality and of the "Law of Nations" (Jus Gentium, International Law), and the official text, signed and sealed by both delegations and exchanged and certified by the two powers, was in Latin, with unofficial copies in Russian, Chinese and Manchu. These "Western" aspects of the treaty--such as the use of several languages and the idea of the equality of the contracting parties--were due to the influence

of the two European advisers to the Chinese delegation the Jesuits Thomas Pereira and Francois Gerbillon.[15] The treaty designated the border from the Gorbitsa, a northern tributary of the Amur, and the Stanovoi (Outer Khingan) mountain range which runs eastward to the sea. The Uda river basin, located between the northern and southern spurs of the Stanovoi range, was to be determined later. (See Appendix I.) In the southwest, the Argun river which together with the Shilka forms the Amur, was designated as a boundary so that all lands lying to the south of it should belong to China, while those lying to the north of it were to belong to Russia. Albazin was to be demolished. (See Appendix I and II.) The Amur remained a Chinese river.

The Treaty of Kiakhta,[16] concluded on October 21, 1727, also on the basis of equality, delineated the Sino-Russian border westward from Kiakhta and closed Mongolia to the Russians. The border ran along the Sayan and Altai mountain ranges westward. (See Appendix III.)

The Russians concluded the treaty of Nerchinsk on the theory of Peter the Great who saw only two possibilities for Russia in the Far East: voyevat ili torgovat (wage war or trade). Since his European wars kept him too busy for the former, he chose expanded trade relations.

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15. For the full text see Sebes, op. cit., pp. 280-7.
16. For the full text see Mark Mancall, Russia and China. Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728. Harvard University Press. 1971, pp. 302-310.

In this Russia succeeded for a while. Between 1696 and 1721 twelve Russian caravans came to China. Yet, in spite of the fact that Russia agreed to the conditions laid down in the Treaty of Kiakhta, her trade with China diminished. After 1727 only a few caravans went as far as Peking and a little later trading was moved to Kiakhta altogether.

The reason for this decline of trade must be sought in the completely different conception Russia and China had of their relationship. China wanted neither war nor trade but simply the pacification of the territories over which she claimed sovereignty. She aimed to achieve this by isolating them from Russian influence. China wanted to close Mongolia and the Amur region to Russians and to transform these territories into a belt of buffer states under the exclusive control of China. She agreed to trade until she could accomplish the pacification of these territories. The pacification of the Ölöd Mongols took place in three phases. The first ended with Galdan's defeat and death (1697); the second with Tsewang Araptan's death (1727); and the third phase with Amursana's flight to Siberia and the invasion of Ili by China (1757). After these campaigns Chinese suzerainty extended far into Central Asia and the border line in the northern part of Sinkiang and west of Outer Mongolia extended north of Zaisan-nuur along the lower Irtysh for about a hundred miles. The pacified territories were incorporated into the Chinese colonial system under the Ministry of

Dependencies. In order to transform these as well as the Amur territories into a buffer zone the Manchus closed them to Chinese immigration. The isolationist policy and the creation of the buffer states proved advantageous to Russia and helped her accomplish what she had failed to accomplish at Nerchinsk and Kiakhta.

In 1756, General Fu Sen-o, after inspecting the Amur region--the only inspection undertaken--reported that there were no traces of human activity because the area was too cold for even animals or plants. By the middle of the nineteenth century the entire population of the Amur region numbered less than eleven thousand natives, and the Ussuri region had less than two thousand inhabitants. In 1850 General I-shan, the military governor of Heilungchiang, reported that the Trans-Amur region was a wasteland and only a handful of Manchu hunters camped on the bank of the Amur. The virtual absence of a Chinese population had also been noticed by western travelers who around that time sailed down the Amur. The low density of the population, the disappearance of Jesuit advisers, whose influence and geographical knowledge was an important factor in the negotiations at Nerchinsk, played into the hands of the Russians. As Manchu power declined in China, in a series of "unequal" treaties China was forced to cede important territories to Russia, e.g. in the Treaty of Aigun (1858) the Trans-Amur territories, in the Treaty of Peking

(1860) the land lying beyond the Ussuri. The study of these lies beyond the scope of this pamphlet.

Until 1972 the vast majority of scholars agreed in their opinion that only the treaties of Nerchinsk and Kiakhta could be considered as having been concluded between "equals", on the basis of the Law of Nations. The treaties of the nineteenth century were forced upon China against her will. The Sino-Soviet border dispute which led to the general deterioration of the relationship between the two countries arose because of a different interpretation of the circumstances that led to the signing of these treaties. The Soviets consider them as diplomatic instruments signed by the Chinese of their own, free will and hence fully valid. The Chinese put them into the vast category of "unequal" treaties forced upon them by western powers. The present conflict cannot be understood without taking into account early Russo-Chinese relations in Inner Asia.

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This teaching aid leans heavily on two books by the present author, and incorporates verbatim quotations from them. The books are The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), and The Diary of Thomas Pereira, S. J. (Rome: Institutum Historicum S. I., 1961); and The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute Viewed through Seventeenth-Century Documents: The Chinese Case, (to be published).

There are of course quite a few books, and good ones, dealing with the Russian expansion into Asia. One is that of Mark Mancall, Russia and China, Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728 (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1971). This book deals with the Treaty of Kiakhta (1728) and gives a good overview of Russo-Chinese relations up to that date. It has, however, a few drawbacks. It relies too heavily on Russian sources and studies the relationship from the Russian point of view, and consequently has an anti-Jesuit bias. Another drawback is the fact that it downplays the importance of the Treaty of Nerchinsk as more a "statement of problems to come than a solution to past problems," and tries to show that the Treaty of Kiakhta introduced "The Sino-Russian Treaty System."

In 1972 there appeared in the Soviet Union the second volume of a monumental work of historical research entitled Russko-kitajskie otnosheniya v XVII veke,

[Russo-Chinese Relations in the 17th Century] edited by S. L. Tikhvinskiy. The introduction of this work, written by V. S. Myasnikov deals with "The Manchu Invasion of the Amur Region and the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689" (pp. 5-54). Myasnikov reinterprets the Treaty in a way favorable to current Soviet policy.

A most valuable collection of the early Russo-Chinese treaties Sbornik dogovorov Rossii s Kitaem. 1689-1881, (Sanktpeterburg 1889) has been reprinted and edited with an introduction by Michael Weiers under the title The Treaties Between Russia and China, 1698-1881, (Bonn, Klaus Wehling Verlag, 1979).

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The literature since 1971 and especially Russian

and Chinese works prove that it is the Treaty of Nerchinsk that is the cornerstone in Sino-Russian relations as well as in the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute.

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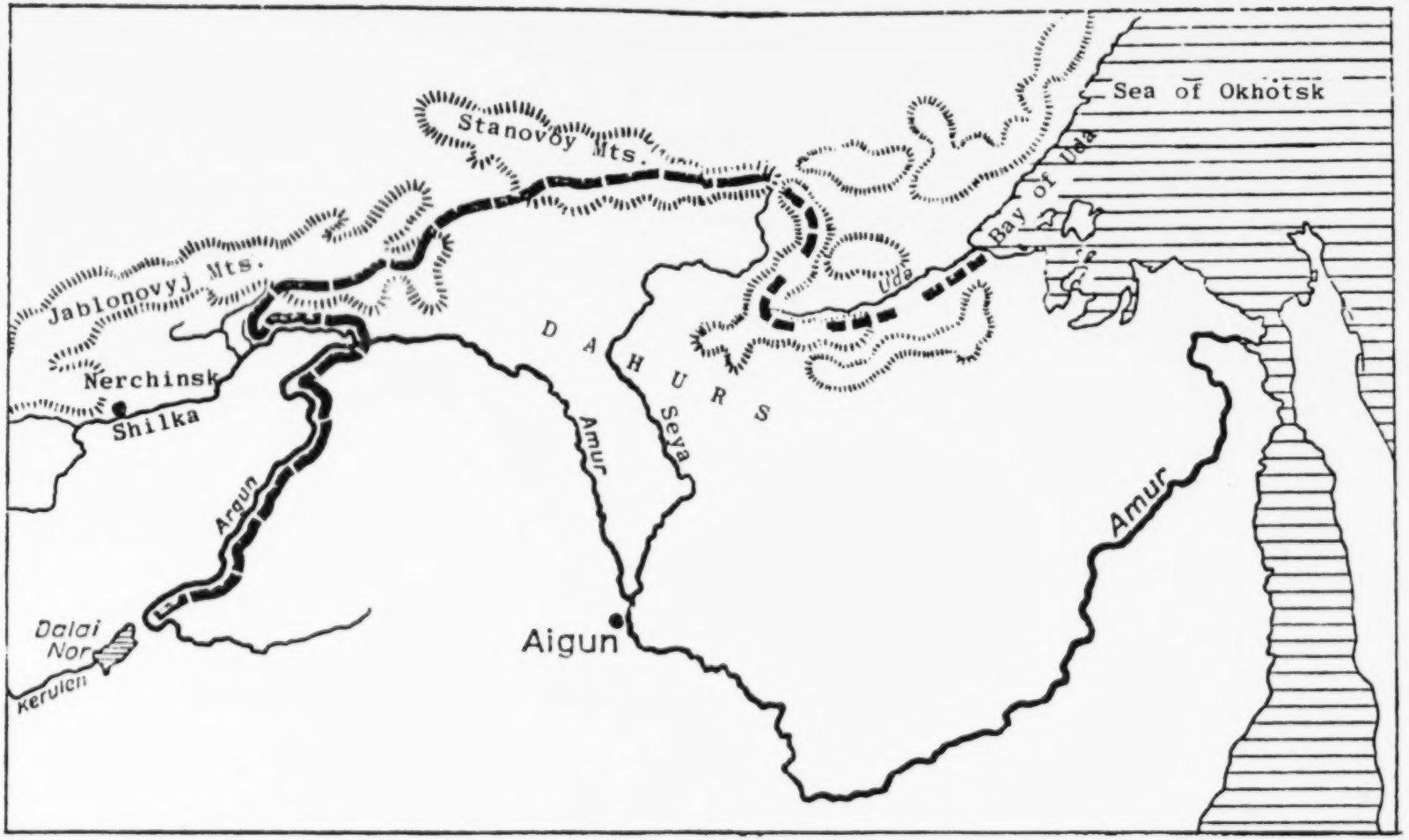
Relations, Lattimore's The Mongols of Manchuria (New York, 1934) and Manchuria- Cradle of Conflict (rev. ed. New York, 1935) are excellent.



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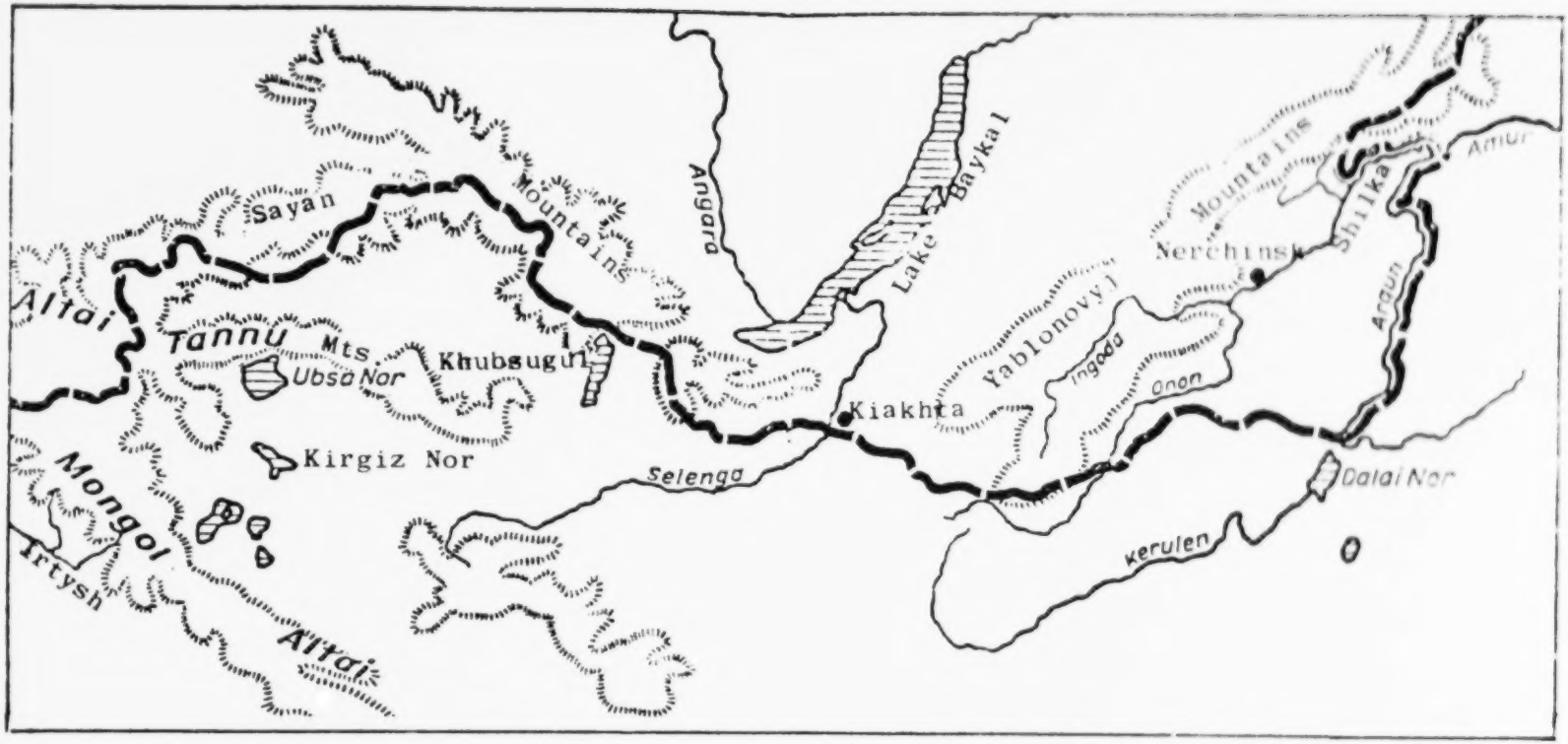

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